

## Message Text

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ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CA-01 L-03 H-02 HA-05 /030 W  
-----022787 182223Z /65

R 171746Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6216

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 07803

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: CGEN, UK  
SUBJ: REDUCING CONSULAR WORKLOADS

REF: STATE 114356

SUMMARY: IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE 114356 THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE IN REDUCING CONSULAR VISITATION TO U.S. CITIZEN PRISONERS CONVICTED AND SERVING SENTENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM ONCE A MONTH TO ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN THE BRITISH PRISON SYSTEM ARE SUCH THAT MORE FREQUENT VISITATION IS UNNECESSARY. WE FURTHER BELIEVE THAT IT CONSTITUTES A DRAIN ON CONSULAR MANPOWER WHICH COULD BE BETTER SPENT ON INCREASING SERVICES TO CITIZENS AT THE TIME OF THEIR INITIAL ARREST. END SUMMARY.

1. AT PRESENT THERE ARE 51 U.S. CITIZENS IMPRISONED IN ENGLAND AND WALES. THIRTEEN OF THEM ARE IN PRISON PENDING TRIAL, TWO ARE PENDING THE RESULTS OF THEIR APPEALS, AND 38 HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF CRIMES AND ARE SERVING THEIR SENTENCES. THESE 38 ARE INCARCERATED IN 23 DIFFERENT PRISONS, NINETEEN OF WHICH ARE OUTSIDE GREATER LONDON. ALTHOUGH GREAT BRITAIN IS NOT EXTENSIVE IN AREA, THESE PRISONS ARE DISPERSED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ARE OFTEN LOCATED IN PLACES DIFFICULT OF  
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ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. CONSEQUENTLY CONSULAR VISITS TO EACH OF THE NINETEEN PRISONS OUTSIDE LONDON AND RETURN TAKES THE MINIMUM OF A FULL WORKING DAY AND FOR SOME A DAY AND A HALF'S TRAVEL IS INVOLVED. WITH THE INCLUSION OF VISITS TO FOUR LONDON PRISONS AT LEAST ONE CONSULAR OFFICER IS ABSENT FROM THE EMBASSY EVERY WORKING DAY MAKING ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE PRISON VISITS. THIS IS

WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE MANHOURS SPENT IN COORDINATING THE VISITS; IN CONTACTING LAWYERS, COURT OFFICIALS, POLICE, AND THE HOME OFFICE; OR IN DRAFTING REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE. THESE ACTIVITIES OCCUPY AT LEAST ANOTHER HALF MAN-YEAR ANNUALLY.

2. THE EMBASSY FULLY APPRECIATES AND AGREES WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S EMPHASIS ON OBTAINING PROMPT ACCESS TO ARRESTED CITIZENS AND ON PROVIDING MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO THEM. IT IS BECAUSE WE AGREE WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES TO ARRESTED CITIZENS THAT WE WISH TO SHIFT THE EMPHASIS FROM UNNECESSARY ROUTINE MONTHLY VISITATION OF PERSONS CONVICTED AND SERVING SENTENCE TO THE MORE URGENT AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH A CITIZEN'S INITIAL ARREST AND PRETRIAL DETENTION. WE SEE NO SIGNIFICANT DIMINUTION IN THE MANHOURS UTILIZED ON ARREST CASES RESULTING FROM SUCH A CHANGE, BUT WE DO SEE AN ENORMOUS INCREASE IN THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS.

3. IF THE DEPARTMENT CONCURS THE EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE VISITING AT LEAST MONTHLY ALL PRISONERS ON REMAND AWAITING TRIAL, THOSE PENDING RESOLUTION OF AN APPEAL,

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6217

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AND THOSE CONVICTED AND SERVING SENTENCE WHO HAVE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF SOME SORT. BUT FOR THE PRISONER WHO IS SERVING HIS SENTENCE WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS, VISITS WILL BE REDUCED TO ONE EVERY THREE MONTHS. THE TIME SAVED WOULD BE DEVOTED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OUR ASSISTANCE TO ARRESTEES, MOST SPECIFICALLY BY OBTAINING

IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO NEWLY ARRESTED CITIZENS, WHETHER IN LONDON OR OUT; BY MAKING MORE FREQUENT VISITS IN CASES OF PARTICULAR COMPLEXITY OR SENSITIVITY; BY INCREASING THE DEPTH AND RESPONSIVENESS OF OUR CORRESPONDENCE TO FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CONGRESSMEN OF DETAINEES; AND BY FOLLOWING UP MORE CLOSELY AND EFFECTIVELY LEGITIMATE REQUESTS BY PRISONERS.

4. AS THE EMBASSY HAS EMPHASIZED PREVIOUSLY THE CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT IN BRITISH PRISONS ARE EQUIVALENT TO THOSE PREVAILING IN THE UNITED STATES AND DO NOT WARRANT, AS IN MANY COUNTRIES, THE REGULAR INTERVENTION OF CONSULAR OFFICERS TO DEFEND THE PRISONER'S HUMAN RIGHTS. THERE ARE NO LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AND THE CULTURAL BARRIERS ARE NOT SO GREAT AS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. EACH PRISON HAS A QUALIFIED SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER AND MEDICAL OFFICER AND OUR CONSULAR OFFICERS WHO HAVE VISITED VIRTUALLY EVERY PRISON IN THE COUNTRY ARE CONVINCED THAT MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR

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PRISONERS ARE OF A HIGH STANDARD. IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT THIS REDUCTION IN VISITS WOULD STILL ACCOMPLISH ALL THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSES SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH TWO OF STATE 31803, A - J. GIVEN THE HIGH STANDARD OF THE BRITISH PRISON SYSTEM QUARTERLY VISITS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY POINTS A, B, D, H, I, AND J. POINTS C AND E WOULD BE LESS SIGNIFICANT TO PRISONERS PAST CONVICTION AND APPEAL, F IS NOT A PROBLEM HERE AND G DOES NOT APPLY TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

5. WE THEREFORE URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO ALLOW US TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR MONTHLY VISITS TO THOSE WHO REALLY DO NOT REQUIRE IT IN ORDER TO CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS ON THOSE WHO WILL MOST BENEFIT FROM IT.

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